THE COPPIE OF A LETTER SENT INTO England by a Gentleman, from the towne of Saint Denis in France.

Wherein is truely set forth the good successe of the Kings Maiesties forces against the Leaguers and the Prince of Parmas power.

With the taking of a Conuoie of Victuals sent by the Enemie to succour Paris. And the grieuous estate of the said Citie at this present.

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1590.

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After that the Prince of Parma was come into the dominions of France, he ſought opportunitie where he might beſt plant himſelfe and his armie in ſafetie, meaning by policie firſt to ſettle himſelfe in ſome part of the Kings regiment, and to come with ſuch force as vppon ſodaine the king could not remoue, except he ſhould raiſe his ſiege from before Paris, and then to make warre vpon him, which were greatly to the kinges hinderance, and the great aduantage of the enemie, for while the king had bin making warre vpon him, the Leaguers might haue had the eaſier means to haue brought in

freſh men and victuall to haue comforted that Citie, which is in wonderfull diſtreſſe, and the famine ſo grieuous among them, as it was neuer greater at the ſiege of Ieruſalem. The true eſtate whereof is in moſt lamentable ſorte diſcourſed in the latter end of this Letter. But the king whoſe magnanimitie is knowen and founde ſufficient throughout the kingdome of France, perceiuing the intent and policie of the prince of Parma, neither meant to rayſe his ſiege from the Citie of Paris, nor to ſuffer that parte of Picardie to be vnfurniſhed for the princes welcome. For hauing planted that notable warriour Monſieur de la Nowe, his principall lieftenant for thoſe partes, being a man knowen to be both politike and wiſe, and for martiall affaires found and approued to be one of the beſt in al France. This Monſieur de la Now hearing of the princes policie, who came thither with xx. thoulande men, diuided them into three parts, and purpoſed that one part ſhould goe vnto the towne of Lanie, being in number three thouſand, other fiue thouſand ſhould depart another waie for the ſuccour of the Leaguers, and to enlarge the armie of the Duke de Maine. The reſt be determined ſhould ſtaie with his owne perſon, whom he ſeemed at the firſt to conduct backe again towards Bruſſels, but on a ſodaine toke another waie, and paſſed with his power towards Artoyes, where with great policie he is planted, yet far inough for doing any great harm, for he is ten leagues from the king, and hath intrenched him ſelfe within a wood, where he lieth verie ſtrōg. Thus hauing diſpearced his armie into three partes, he appointed men of great experience to be leaders of them, ſo that Monſieur la Now aduiſed againſt whether of the armies hee were to ioyne his forces, ſo he caſt about & met with the fiue thouſand who were marching to ioyne with the forces of du Maine, and thereby to make him and the Leaguers more ſtronger, againſt whom he had ſuch good ſucceſſe, that he diſcomfited the greater part who eſcaped by flight, but many of them came ſhort home. And while la Now and his forces

were

were thus buſied, the other three thouſand went to a towne called Lanie, where making ſome ſhew of battel, the gouernour thereof (as it is ſayd) had before ſolde it to the prince, and ſodainly he yelded it, wherupon the ſoldiers who were Spaniards iſſued in and moſt cruelly put the inhabitants thereof to the ſworde, and for certaintie thoſe butcherly gouernours and ſouldiers not therewith ſatiſfied, did cut and mangle the dead carcaſes into peeces. Which when it came to the eares of the king, he was verie ſorrowfull, & wrote vnto his gouernour and forces in thoſe parts, commanding them to reuenge that bloudie act, wherein they ouerſlipped no fit occaſion for performing of the kings commandement. So that within few daies, notwithſtanding that they had ſtrongly entrenched themſelues, & ſeated a ſufficient garriſon therein, with the loſſe of a few men the ſaid towne was recouered, and thoſe in the towne together with the ſaid ſoldiers recompenced with the like rigour. Which doubtleſſe was but the iuſt iudgement of God vppon them, yea, the Captaine who at the firſt had betraied the ſayde towne and ſolde it for a peece of monie, was at the receit of the ſaid monie ſtabbed in with a dagger by a common ſouldier, who among them reuelled away his Spaniſh reals, which he was receiuing for his reward, euen as wickedly as he had purchaſed the ſame. Thus may we ſée how the iuſt iudgement of God lighteth vpon ſuch wicked bloud ſuckers, & although they are a ſmall time preſerued from it, yet in the ende it lighteth on their owne heads to their vtter confuſion. The prince of Parma hauing thus ſetled himſelfe and diuided his forces, he prepared to ſend a Conuoie of victuall to relieue the Citie of Paris: There were furniſhed for this Conuoie fiue hundreth wagons laden with victuals, namely beefe (a meate little vſed among the French) with mutton, and ſundrie ſortes of fiſh both ſalt and freſh, with meale and corne vnground. There was alſo in the ſame twentie hundreth duſſen of bread all readie baked, becauſe of the great want of thoſe in the Citie, who were in ſuch caſe as they woulde

willing-

willingly haue eaten the same raw, and the meale & corne vnbaked, rather than they would haue staid the dressing or baking thereof, so grieuous and extreame is their present famine, as after more at large appeareth. The kings maiestie hauing intelligence by his espials of this Conuoie, and that such prouision was comming from the prince towards Paris, he determined with al policie and force to preuent the same, least the rebellious Cities shoulde take courage vnto them, and thereby conceiue to haue some great resistance by meanes of the enemies to the estate roiall, and so take occasion to triumph the more. This conuoie of victual, as I said before, being sent towardes Paris, came peaceably within foure or fiue leagues of the place, being garded with a sufficient band of men, whereof the king hauing not onely intelligence, but also of a Captaine which issued forth of the citie of Paris, who with fiftéene hundred men went to méte and receiue the said Conuoie of victuals, sent forth presently diuerse of his companies vnder the conduct of the Earle Chastilion, who practised not onely to intercept their passage, but also their returning back againe, in which seruice the kings faithfull subiects so couragiously behaued themselues, that in short time they had their desire, for on a sodaine being in a readines, they had a sight of the said waggons whom in short space they toke, and slew all those souldiers that came with the said Conuoie to defend the same, & made so hot an assault vpon the souldiers which issued forth of Paris, that they were al taken and slain with the losse of a few of the kings souldiers. The princes forces vnderstanding by their scoutes what had happened, durst not come on nor approch to resist the kings forces, while they were in fight with the Conuoie, whereof the valiant Chastilion hauing intelligence, venturouslie set forward, and with the kings forces made towards them, and after a fierce and valiant assalt made by them vpon the enemie, who at the first gaue a verie strong and stout resistance, they were all put to ỹ sword, saning some few who escaped by flight, but neuer

a man

a man of those escaped aliue which issued forth of the Citie of Paris.

Thus with great ioy the said Conuoie was brought into the said towne of Saint Denis, the value whereof is by common estimation thirty thousand pounds and better, being so much victuall as they could in reasonable sort prouide for them in three moneths.

But so sone as the Parisians heard of this newes, they were wonderous sorrowfull, and were filled with so great heuines, that they rested out of all hope to liue to see the day when any succour can be sent them by the enemy: and are at this present persuaded, that all that euer the Prince of Parma can do for their relieue, is but to linger in that place where he is, and so to weary the king by detracting of time as he did in the low Countries, when he came thither first.

Since this discomforture of the enemy, the Dutches of Guize, the Dutches of Maine, Le Cheuallier de Aumale, and diuers other of the chiefe of the Leaguers haue disguised themselues in simple attire, and therby secretly issued forth of the said Citie: by meanes wherof they are secretly escaped, being not able any longer to endure the vnspeakeable famine that is in the same: for the Launce-knightes euen against nature and reason are through the extreme famine constrained to eate their owne naturall children.

Before this Conuoy aforesaid, came downe towardes Parris, the prince of Parma after he had intrenched himselfe in this towd, in the middle whereof is a strong Castle, he sent fiue hundreth of his horsemen to take view of the kings Camp: who were espied by two hundreth of the kings horsemen, those two hundreth set vpon them and chased them into their owne Trenches, where within their owne Trenches and in the way to the Trenches they were all slaine.

The prince of Parma, will not by any meanes enter into battell with the king, although he haue bin verie much urged thereunto, yea, he hath endured the termes of cowar-

dize for his often denials, hauing had much aduantage offered him to enter the field, wherein he excuseth himselfe in this sort, that he hath no commission from the king his maister, either to make battel or to fight in the field against the French king: and that his only charge was to victaile Paris if he could, and to succour those of the League with his Forces and Councell. And with this resolution, he continueth still in the said place, without offer of any fight, except some small skirmishes betweene his and the kinges Souldiers.

It could not but be a great comfort vnto the people in their miserie, when the king receiued some of them with great curtesie and gaue them leaue, which drone the rebellious Nobilitie openly to confesse, and from their heartes to think, that he was a king of wonderfull vertuous and mercifull disposition, and would gladly haue yelded themselues, if their repentance might any way haue pacified the kings displeasure, but for as much as they did all know, that the king who is and euer hath been a true fulfiller of his word and promise, hath made an othe, that none of the conspirators of the deceased kings death shall escape and remaine pardonable, but that he will be reuenged of them for their vnnaturall treason, and that nothing but their liues shall pacifie their hainous murther committed: and in respect thereof, they keepe themselues so long as they may out of the kinges handes. The French king God be thanked, is wonderous well prouided of all thinges fit for warre, and with him is ioyned all the chiefest nobilitie and princes of France: he hath of footemen thirtie thousand, and seuen thousand Horse. And with this Army the king continueth still against Paris, which Citie is not likely to hold out long, especially by reason some of the chiefe of the leaguers is fled from thence, whose countenance daily held them in awe. The Lord God blesse and prosper the kinges royall Patellie, and send him the victorie ouer all his enemies, to the glorie of God and aduancement of his holy word, for

there

there was neuer in France a king of so noble a courage, so skilfull in the warres, and so hardie against the proudest foe, which is all the greeke the enemies haue, because they haue to deale against so valiant a Soldiour. From Saint Denis the second of September.

1590.

A TREATISE CONCERNING THE EXTREME FAMINE OF THE CITIE of Paris at this present: which is as grieuous as it was at the siege of Ierusalem.

THe Kings Maiestie, hauing often heard of the great famine and miserable calamitie, whereinto the obstinate parisians had wilfully plunged themselues, onely through the persuasiõs of the chæfest of the leaguers side, being for the most part of the Cleargy. And albeit the extremitie were great, where into they were fallen, yet the report of the increased misery, since that time hath sounded so lamentable in his royall eares, and amongst all the rest of his princely and honorable traine, that the remembrance thereof will not easily passe or be raced out of minde: the certaine truth whereof, is as followeth.

After the king had entred S. Denis, as you heard long since with all his power, and that he was in full possession thereof, there issued out of Parris diuers and sundry times many poore creatures, resembling rather the Anotamies of death, then people possessed with life, so sore were they wasted with famine, and consumed through extreame hunger, that excepting the skinne, there was nothing left to couer their feble bones. So that it preuailed nothing to be young or bewtifull in this case, or to boast of health, or to haue heapes of gold, for their stomackes desired that, which for golde nor siluer could bee gotten, yea their verie harts failed them for want of necessary nourishment, wherupon they became careleste of life, desiring death or spedie deliuerie from this their miserable estate, that they might no longer behold with their eyes, nor heare with their eares, the bitter cries of their starued children, and the wonderfull multitudes of their friends and kindred, which for want of food daily died within that populous and great Citie. Resolued therfore to finish their dolefull dayes, or to finde relefe for maintenance of their loathed liues, with leaue of the cruell gouernours they issued (as I said before) out of the Citie, and presenting them selues before the kings souldiers, fel downe at their fæt, yælding them selues to the kings mercy, about the number of a score at a time, men, women and children, who being brought incontinent before his roial maiestie, so sone as they entered his sight, with bitter teares trickling downe their chækes they prostrated themselues at his fæte, and as loude as their feble voices woulde serue, they cried, Viue le Roy, God saue the king. His maiestie amazed at the view of so pittifull a spectacle, and moued with a kingly compassion towards them, sawe with his eies and conceiued in his heart, what intol-

The Citizens of Paris issued foorth to the king.

The kings mercifull heart.

intollerable famishment the obstinate Citie had alredie endured, but hauing a desire to learne further of the state thereof, after he had wel viewed the persons of these miserable men, he demanded of them the intent of their comming. Whereupon they returned this answere, that forasmuch as they were not able anie longer to indure the grieuous famine whereinto they were brought by the long and deserued siege which his Maiestie mainteined about their City, and being brought so low, that the gouernours could not by reason of their weaknes imploie them in any seruice, they had free liberty to depart the Citie if so they thought it conuenient: as being people that were likly with many more in the Citie, to cause an infection to arise by means of sicknes among the rest of the inhabitants, wherefore, sayd they, most noble and victorious king, wee are come vnto your Highnes, acknowledging that wee are vnworthie of anie longer life, by reason we haue bin most vniust and rebellious subiects, and vnworthie that so gracious and mercifull a prince should open his mouth vnto vs, neuertheles, most mighty king, had it not bin through wicked perswasions, we had neuer yelded to holde on so cursed a side, but with whome perswasions could not preuaile, they vsed meanes to inforce, being well assured that they holde the most parte by constraint, whose bodies being enclosed within the stonie walls of Paris, haue euerie daie their heartes infolded with their king, considering within what small compas there is fode inough with fauour and gentlenes to be gotten, and yet they be at the point of death euen for a small quantitie of bread, that may with their eyes beholde euen plentie among beasts while they themselues pine and cannot come by it, whereby the difference is shewed betwixt the fauour and furie of a king,

The Citizēs kept by constraint.

king, and therewithall, the recompence of obedience and rebellion.

We confesse therefore, most noble king, that th mightie and iust God hath bent himselfe against vs and poured foorth the viall of his wrath ouer these traiterous confederates of the Leagures, of which number we must of force account and acknowledge we haue too long bene, and therefore we humblie submit our selues into your maiesties hands, to deale with vs as it seemeth good in your sight.

His Maiestie hauing heard this lamentable complaint, reuiued their hearts with a fauourable countenance, and according to his princely disposition, in a milde manner demaunded what prouision of victuals (in their iudgements) remayned yet in the citie, and what it was wherewith they hoped to sustayne the lines of so infinite a multitude as remayned in the towne, wishing to declare the same in all trueth and simplicitie of heart, euen as they would hope to finde mercie at his handes for their knowen and manifest rebellion, and how long time they supposed the same would last.

Before the mightie and dreadfull God of heauen, who knowes the secrets of the harts, and shall iudge the thoughts that are hatched by vntruth, so wil we, said they, shew and declare this to the king, as farre as our memorie and knowledge doth stretch. And if your maiestie find vs false let the same be recompenced with the vildest death that euer anie did endure. And herewithall one of them who was knowne of best iudgement, and that had bene of great account in times past, put forth his voice before the king, and most part of the princes and nobles about him, speaking as followeth.

Necessi= findes ma= ny shiftes.

Necessitie the whetstone of mans wit, hauing in=

forced

inforced me among these my companions and sorrowful associates, with an infinite multitude of my friendes, kinsfolke and neighbours to search for sustenance, for the maintenance of me and my poore wife and children, inquired by all meanes after foode when it became scant in the Citie, being the onely care that euery person had to seeke for the same: and albeit after a small time that we were besieged, wholesome foode was kept wonderfull close and scant among us, yet our eares were euer so diligent to hearken after it, that by one meanes or other we alwaies heard where it was to bee had for money, and although the prouision was great within the citie, yet by reason of the marueilous multitude of inhabitants, within fiue monethes after, there was no wholesome foode to be had for gold nor treasure, for the Nobles and principall of the citie, suspecting a long seege, got as much thereof as they could for their owne prouision, and the cloysters with the vniuersitie did the like: and as for the Clargie, they stayed not behinde any in that matter, being men wise enough to take the choice before all other, by which meanes the common sorte of the Citizens soone found the smart thereof, and in vaine sought they after that they could not finde: when flesh failed, butter and cheese began to grow precious at rich mens tables, though at the first they much repined thereat, as people that had not beene much acquainted with such course cates. But the iust God seeing our vnthankfull hartes, that scorned his gifts, and despised his blessinges, in two monethes after sent such a change, that the flesh of Horses, Asses, Dogges, Cats, Rats, Mice, Weasels, and Moles, became daintie dishes at gentle mens tables, and bore such a price, that no poore person was able to compas any, & then our queasie stomacks began to be contented with any thing, were it a frying panne full of Frogs, a dish of snailes, or a Pkellet full of

Necessity finds many shiftes.

Rats, mice & other vermine good meate in Paris.

garden wormes sod in broth: she that went in her house, would haue béene glad to haue licked her lippes after them, and would haue bidden her dearest friend to the banquete, had hee not béene of her owne household, so sweéte a sauce and so sauory did hunger make the same to taste, and yet many of those that thus haue fed, and yet would be glad to méete with the worst of these thinges rehearsed before they felt the force of hunger, with many others, said they would starue into death before any such corrupt thing should corrupt their stomacks, and yet was all this but a taste of famine, and nothing comparable to that which afterwarde fell vpon vs, for in short time our breade of pease, tares, oates and acorns vtterly failed vs, so that none could be had or found in any place to be solde, although we would haue killed one another with thrust, to haue gotten the quantitie of a farthing loafe (farre worse then any which in former time we gaue our horses) though we would haue giuen a French crowne for so much, and those vermine also that we prepared and dressed, as before is shewed, was on all sides so caught vp and eaten, that in the end there was none to be gotten, neither for one nor other: and then began such mortalitie through famine, that ten thousand haue already dyed thereof, as may be séene in the register booke, and at this present, ten thousand more are like to perish through the like extremitie. A most grieuous and intollerable burden sufficient to inforce a flinty hart to remorse and pittie, how great a warning ought this to be to all cities that are in a flourishing estate, where plentie powreth forth her treasures, in so much that delicacie is become lothsome, in respect of an vnsatiable desire, and daintinesse will not be contented without great superfluitie, euery man wishes for better, and no man thinketh that he hath gotes enough, and few remaine thankfull for any thing: consider, you

Ten thousand dead of famine in Paris.

that

that vse excesse, and will not so much as lift vp your eyes, much lesse your hartes, to render praises for so great benefits, consider (I say) how ioyful & glad many nobles & men of great worship would be of the worst bit or bone that you fling vnder the table to your dogs, while your selues in the middest of your excesse, sit turning with your knives point, the meate in diuers dishes, and can scant among them all finde one morsell to fit your fancie, notwithstanding how gladsom a present the least of your loaues would be in Paris, let those imagine that can conceiue of their miserie, and how many would intreate vpon their knées, to be preferred, as it were, to the shaking of the table cloth, or carrying away of the trenchers. Vndoubtedly, I am perswaded, that if the daintiest mouthed dame in Europe had but one monethes experience of the like want, she should after a while she did liue, estéeme better of the least crumme, then she doth now of all the dainties vpon the table. I beséech God be mercifull vnto vs, & forgiue our vnthankfulnes, & grant vs grace to reforme our liues, lest we be plagued for our leudnes. But to returne to the former matter.

The King hauing heard this doulefull discourse, proceéded further, and demaunded whether before their issuing forth of the Citie, they had found no meanes whereby they of the towne might haue something to put into their bellies to strengthen the hart, and to helpe the stomacke, and abate the fury of hunger. The kings second demaund.

Thrée weékes (saide the reporter) wee continued without any sustenance, sane onely Flies and Beettles, whereby we sought to sustaine our selues, with diuers other like thinges, till in the end our emptie intrels enforced vs to séeke some meanes for relefe, at what time the people deuised to gather all kinde of rootes such as grew within the compasse of the walles, which being purtched or otherwise dryed, we ground them in a mill, Flyes and Beetles.

and therewith bake us breade, but alas, slender comfort conceaued wee thereby, though we were glad of any thing, for in lesse then two dayes, our people were constrained to finde some other remedie against hunger, whereupon it was deuised to saw all the timber wee could come by and conuert it into dust, and thereof to make us another sorte of breade, which deuice continued longer then many of the former, and contented us a great deale better, by reason we had some quantitie thereof to fill our emptie stomaches, but this was not to be had without money, except a body had of their owne wherewith to make it, in so much that all the wood planckes and bordes which conueniently we could come by, was put to that vse, and when this began to grow something scant, euery man hauing care principally to nourish himselfe and meditating dayly how to inuent meanes to procure sustenance, being a thing wherein euery one applyed his wits, at length the extremitie was such, that the Churchyardes were digged for deade mens bones, and all the saide bones they carryed together into one place in the citie, where they might lye from the raine, the which afterwarde being washed and dryed, were beaten in peeces and ground, and thereof an other sorte of bread was made, and thus we were glad to feed our stomackes with the bones of the dead. In which time if it may please your Maiestie to pardon my long and tedious discourse, I am to declare a most woefull accident which then happened.

Bread of saw-dust.

Dead mens bones eaten

Men worth twenty or thirty thousand pound made common souldiers.

There was then dwelling among us, a very honest and substantiall man, which was Sargeant ouer one of our companies, for the skill they founde to bee in him, who was imployed as were the rest of the Citizens to be a souldier in the Citie for those which of late were estéemed men worth twentie or thirtie thousand pounde, were enforced to become common souldiers, whose

whose substance thereby is wasted and brought to nothing, so much nede have they of men in the citie. This Sargeant before spoken of, comming home to his house about seuen dayes agoe, his wife and his children came presently running about him, hoping her had brought something for them to eate, at what time there was a neighbour or two in the house saying his comming, and with his wife lamenting the common calamitie, hoping from his mouth to heare some newes of the yelding vp of the Citie into your highnesse handes. But the cryes of the starued children interrupting the talke betwixt him and his neighbours, the poore man with a sorrowfull hart sat him downe, fetching a deepe sigh, not knowing what to doe for them, the children still cloying his eares with their pittifull complaintes. Ha Father, saide they, will you see vs dye for want of bread: if there remained any thing vpon our bones beside the skinne, we would not let to feede thereon: but if no other remedie may be founde, let the one of vs serue for foode to the other, or els spare not our lines to feede our mother and you, better were it for vs by death to be ridde of our miserie, then to endure a famine the ende whereof is vnknowne: is there nought in this Citie saue men to feede vpon: why may not the one of vs deuoure the other aliue, or why are the deade bodies of men couered in the ground that might serue a hungry stomacke to feede vpon. The father loking vpon them with a heauie hart, after many teares shed on euery side, hauing pondered these speeches, starte vp as a man purposed to giue them encouragement, and with a comfortable voice briefly saide vnto them, be content my children, and be of good cheare, so soone as these my friends are gone, I will giue you that which shall content you, but alas, if it were sufficient for vs all, I would be loth to part with their company, notwithstanding I hope they consider

The complaint of children for lacke of food.

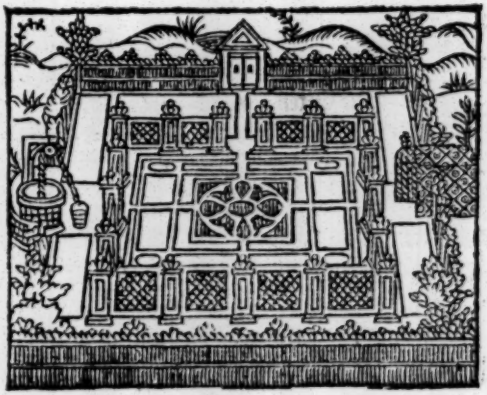
the time as it is, and will not thinke any discourtesie herein, being assured, themselues in the like case woulde doe the like to me, then turning to his neighbours hee saide, the time hath beene we would not haue denied our meate, but our money, but now our money is nothing in respect of our meat, and woe be vnto them that would not giue the poore money to buye meate where it is to be had, wherefore I beseech you leaue vs a while till we haue refreshed our selues, then after I will answere any thing I shall heare spoken by you: hereupon the two men departed, and shortly after, knowing that their dinner lasted not long, these persons went againe thether, knocking and calling for him, maruelling that no body came to make answere, wherefore being very familiar friendes, and suspecting they had beene in their vpper chamber, went vp, whereinto they no sooner entered, but presently they espyed the good man, his wife and two children (about the age of fourteene yeares) all hanged one beside another, and a bill vpon the good mans brest, wherein was writen, By this meanes did I first set my wife and children out of miserie, and after my selfe, for which offence I aske the Lorde mercy and forgiuenesse: and that your highnesse may be the better satisfied of the truth hereof, the men be here that first heard his wordes, and after were wofull witnesses of this Tragedy, in such extremitie remaines this miserable Citie:

A man first hanged his wife & children, and after him selfe for lacke of food.

His Maiestie that scant could refraine teares to heare this dolefull discourse, answered: Ah Paris, thy bloud be on thy owne heade, it is thy selfe and not I that hath caused this great calamitie, the Lord be witnesse twixt thee and me, and rewarde me after the innocencie of my hart: after these wordes causing the starued people to be refreshed, he departed into his chamber, commaunding that no more should be suffered to come forth of the Citie in such sorte.

The Parisians causers of their owne distruction.

Thus

Thus haue you hard the good ſucceſſe of the Kinges Maieſtie, whom no doubt, Almightie God proſpereth and preſerueth, with the euill ſucceſſe of rebellious people, and the enimies againſt Gods truth, whom hee in iuſtice puniſheth, and doth in his iuſt iudgements bring to confuſion: Almightie God ſtil proſper the kings proceedings, and ſend confuſion to his enimies, except they ſpeedely repent and yelde themſelues vnto him, as in right they ought, which God graunt. Amen.

FINIS.